

Surgeon General NOTAM

NuvaRing® Not Appropriate for Most Deployers

February 2010

The following Notice to Airman (NOTAM) is released by the Clinical Quality Management Division, Air Force Medical Operations Agency (AFMOA/SGHQ).

**ATTENTION: THE FOLLOWING IS AN OFFICIAL SG NOTAM
PLEASE PRINT, READ, AND DISSEMINATE TO ALL
PERSONNEL ASSIGNED.**

10-001: NuvaRing® Not Appropriate for Most Deployers

TARGET AUDIENCE: All Air Force Medical Service providers and staff, deployed or in garrison, who prescribe or dispense NuvaRing®.

BACKGROUND: NuvaRing® is the trade name for a combined hormonal contraceptive vaginal ring manufactured by Merck (formerly Schering-Plough, formerly Organon) that is available by prescription. It is a flexible plastic (ethylene-vinyl acetate copolymer) ring that releases a low dose of a progestin and an estrogen over 3 weeks.

Prior to dispensing, NuvaRing® must be stored under refrigeration, 2°C to 8°C (36°F to 46°F). After dispensing, NuvaRing® may be stored at room temperature of 25°C (77°F) for up to a maximum of four months. Avoid direct sunlight or temperatures greater than 30°C (86°F). Replacement is recommended when temperature exceeds 86°F. Due to these temperature requirements, refills cannot be provided via TRICARE Mail Order Pharmacy (TMOP).

**NuvaRing® is not on the CENTCOM formulary
and expires 120 days after dispensing.**

With 180-day or longer deployments becoming the norm, patients have been unable to complete their deployments on NuvaRing® since they have been unable to obtain refills in theater.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. If a patient is expected to be deployed for 120 days or longer, an alternative to NuvaRing® must be considered as the patient will be unable to complete their deployment on NuvaRing®--this transition should occur prior to their deployment.

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RECOMMENDATIONS (continued):

2. If NuvaRing® is prescribed for personnel going TDY less than 120 days, it must be transported in hand-carried luggage (vice stowed baggage) to avoid temperature extremes. NuvaRing® is not recommended for use while deployed to a location where temperature control cannot be maintained.
3. The MTF will incorporate these recommendations into their predeployment clearance processes for installation personnel. Women identified with duty limiting medications must be instructed by the MTF to make an appointment with their PCM to consider another form of birth control at least 2 months prior to deployment. This will allow adequate time to assess and stabilize patients on the new therapy.
4. MTF Pharmacy personnel will annotate a comment in the formulary maintenance section of CHCS to emphasize the time and temperature prescribing constraints to providers in CHCS as well as AHLTA.

Bottom Line: NuvaRing® is not an appropriate medication for personnel deploying for 120 days or longer, or where medication may be subject to extreme temperature variations.

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